

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 PM-04 NSC-05 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9130

UNCLAS DUBLIN 1101

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EI, US
SUBJECT: IRISH TIMES ARTICLE ON WILLIAM V. SHANNON

1. UNDER THE HEADLINE "U.S. ENVOY REJECTS ALLEGATIONS ON
NORTHERN IRELAND," THE IRISH TIMES, TUESDAY, MAY 17,
RAN THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE:

2. BEGIN QUOTE.

THE NEWLY-APPOINTED AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO IRELAND, MR. WILLIAM
SHANNON HAS DESCRIBED AS "ABSURD" A CLAIM MADE IN THE MOST RECENT
ISSUE OF THE 'SUNDAY PRESS' THAT HE GOT HIS JOB AS "A REWARD FOR FR.
SEAN MCMANUS AND THE IRISH NATIONAL CAUCUS".

IN A STATEMENT ISSUED IN WASHINGTON YESTERDAY, MR. SHANNON SAID
THAT HE HAD BEEN "ASTONISHED" BY THE CLAIM AND BY THE FACT THAT
"ANY CORRESPONDENT STATIONED IN THE UNITED STATES AND SUPPOSEDLY
FAMILIAR WITH AMERICAN OPINION COULD CONTRIVE SUCH AN INACCURATE
AND MISLEADING ACCOUNT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S VIEWS AND MY OWN".

THE ARTICLE -- BY-LINED "FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT" -- SUGGESTED
THAT THERE WERE THOSE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD CONCLUDE THAT MR. SHAN-
NON'S APPOINTMENT HAD BEEN A REWARD FOR THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO
PRESIDENT CARTER DURING HIS ELECTION CAMPAIGN BY FR. MCMANUS AND THE
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NATIONAL CAUCUS. IT WAS ALSO CLAIMED IN THE 'SUNDAY PRESS' THAT
THE NEW AMBASSADOR WAS AT ODDS WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT ON THE
QUESTION OF A SOLUTION TO THE NORTHERN PROBLEM AND THAT HIS VIEWS
ON THE NORTH, IN GENERAL, WERE OF A RADICAL CHARACTER.

"I HAVE NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH FR. MCMANUS OR THAT
ORGANISATION" (THE CAUCUS), MR. SHANNON WROTE IN HIS STATEMENT.

"I ABHOR VIOLENCE WHETHER IT COMES FROM THE PROVISIONAL IRA OR FROM THE LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES. LIKE AN OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF AMERICANS OF IRISH BACKGROUND, I AGREE WITH SENATOR KENNEDY, GOVERNOR CAREY AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED LEADERS WHO HAVE CALLED FOR AN END TO VIOLENCE AND URGED AN END TO ANY AMERICAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR VIOLENT METHODS.

"MORE IMPORTANT, PRESIDENT CARTER, DURING HIS CAMPAIGN LAST OCTOBER, AND AGAIN IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR AFTER MEETING WITH DR. GARRET FITZGERALD, MADE CLEAR THAT HE IS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF SEEKING A PEACEFUL POLITICAL SOLUTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND. PRESIDENT CARTER HAS CHOSEN ME FOR THIS POST BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT I FULLY SHARE HIS VIEWS.

"THE SPEECH QUOTED IN THE SUNDAY PRESS ARTICLE (ABOUT THE NORTH) IS ONE THAT I MADE TWO YEARS AGO TO AN AUDIENCE SOME OF WHOSE MEMBERS BELIEVED THAT THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED IF THE BRITISH WITHDREW. IN THAT SPEECH I POINTED OUT THAT IF THE BRITISH DID WITHDRAW, THERE MIGHT BE TERRIBLE BLOODSHED AND THAT A COMPLEX POLITICAL SETTLEMENT SHOULD PRECEDE RATHER THAN FOLLOW BRITISH MILITARY WITHDRAWAL. AS ONE POSSIBLE BASIS FOR SUCH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, I SKETCHED OUT THE IDEAS OF REPARTITION OF NORTHERN IRELAND AND RESETTLEMENT OF THE MINORITY POPULATION. I HAVE SUBSEQUENTLY CONCLUDED THAT THESE ALTERNATIVES WOULD CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN THEY WOULD SOLVE"

MR. SHANNON'S REBUTTAL OF THE CLAIMS IN THE 'SUNDAY PRESS' COME WHILE HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE EMBASSY IN DUBLIN HAS STILL TO BE UNCLASSIFIED

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RATIFIED BY THE UNITED STATES SENATE AND THE IRISH GOVERNMENT. CLEARLY, HE DOES NOT WISH TO START OFF HIS CAREER HERE ON A CONTROVERSIAL NOTE -- OR EVEN FIND HIMSELF REJECTED FOR THE POST AT THE LAST MOMENT DUE TO MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

IN A RECENT ANALYSIS OF THE NORTHERN SITUATION, PRINTED IN 'THE NEW YORK TIMES', OF WHICH HE IS CURRENTLY WASHINGTON BUREAU CHIEF, MR. SHANNON SAYS THAT A REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THE POLITICAL POSITION "HAS BEEN THE CATHOLIC MINORITY'S CONSISTENT SUPPORT FOR THE PEACEFUL, CONSTRUCTIVE POLICIES OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY". IN OTHER SUCH INFLAMED SITUATIONS, HE WRITES, POLITICAL POWER HAS DRIFTED INTO THE HANDS OF RADICAL DOCTRINAIRE OR FANATIC GROUPS. BUT IN THE NORTH NEITHER FACTION OF THE IRA HAS EVER POLLED MORE THAN 1.5 PERCENT OF THE VOTES IN ANY ELECTION.

"EQUALLY REMARKABLE HAS BEEN THE PATIENCE OF THE IRISH GOVERNMENT IN DUBLIN IN WORKING TOWARDS A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT AND ITS REFUSAL TO EXPLOIT THE ANGUISH OF THE NORTH FOR SHORT-RUN PURPOSES. IN THIS STEADFAST COURSE, IT HAS THE CO-OPERATION OF THE MAJOR

OPPOSITION PARTY LED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER JACK LYNCH".

DEALING WITH POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM -- INCLUDING RE-PARTITION, WHICH HE DISMISSES -- THE NEW AMBASSADOR CONCLUDES:

"AFTER THE VARIOUS ALTERNATIVES HAVE FALLEN OF THEIR OWN WEIGHT, THE CURRENT CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED. PRESIDENT CARTER PUT IS WELL TWO MONTHS AGO: 'THE ONLY PERMANENT SOLUTIONS WILL COME FROM THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE. THERE ARE NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS, AND, MOST OF ALL, THERE ARE NO SOLUTIONS THAT OUTSIDERS CAN IMPOSE'."

END QUOTE.

3. EARLIER SUNDAY PRESS ARTICLE SENT OPEN AIR MAIL TO IRISH
DESK OFFICER. RENDAHL

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Comment:
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